



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ST MARGARET'S HALL

7PM

10 MARCH 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Steve Stubbings (Mayor), Jason Mack, Leigh Geddes, Stewart Blackmore, Ken Knapman, Ed Gouge, Terry Gibbs, Brian Lucas, Jim Toogood.

NO. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 15 members of the public present.
- b) There were no questions or comments at this stage.

27/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harry Rees and Tony Marvin.

28/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor declared an interest as a County Councillor.

29/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 10 February 2014, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meetings of 25 February 2014 were received.

30/14 ISLAND FREE SCHOOL

- a) The Mayor invited Steph Boyd, Head teacher of the new Island Free School to address the meeting. He started by saying he had been appointed with a remit to develop an excellent secondary school that would grow to 625 students.
- b) He stressed the relevance to school achievement of size being small enough for all students to be known personally and was clear that the new school's commitment was to an academic, rather than a vocational, curriculum based on the belief that all pupils were capable of achieving 5 A* - C GCSE passes.
- c) The school will have an extra hour at the end of the school day for extra-curricular activities in order to ensure that those travelling from distance are able to participate with the guarantee of transport home through the bus service provided and also as an opportunity for any necessary intervention for students who need it, without cutting into the curriculum.
- d) He said that at present 24% of pupils on the Island came out of Primary schools with lower achievement levels than expected and stressed that all students will be given the opportunity to play an instrument with lessons – and where necessary instruments - paid for.
- e) He highlighted the importance of the developed selection process for staff they had adopted that gave a better than average prospect of appointing staff of high quality.
- f) Referring to the site, he explained the complexities of the process of arriving at the final choice that lies with the Department of Education and that that choice had not yet been made as there are still three sites under consideration.
- g) He provided some traffic figures demonstrating the much lower level of car transport applying to secondary, as opposed to primary schools. The commitment was that 45% of

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- pupils would come from local areas within a 2.6 mile radius.
- h) In closing he stated that this community deserves its own secondary school and one small enough to give its children the maximum prospect of academic success. He was encouraged by the strength and commitment of the Governing Body and listed the range of senior experience they were able to offer the school's development.
 - i) He committed to informing everyone near the St Margaret's site if it is confirmed as the final choice of location and would invite everyone affected to a consultation meeting. He added that the school would also be keen to take on the Rew Valley Sports Centre if the St Margaret's site is confirmed.
 - j) Questions covered dropping off arrangements affecting St Margaret's Glade, the importance the school would give to community engagement, the optimum class size, how teaching posts would be advertised, whether teaching staff would have to be qualified and what would be the nature of links with feeder schools.
 - k) The Mayor thanked Steph Boyd for an inspiring and exciting presentation.
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31/14 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (8/14) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 28 February 2014 and a list of payments made during February 2014.
- b) An accompanying paper set out expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the year to 28 February 2014 with variances from year-to-date budget provision.
- c) It was noted that payments in February included £300 paid to a Surveyor for a report on the Methodist Church in connection with the Town Council supported initiative to retain it as a venue for the Boxing Club.

It was unanimously resolved that:
the Finance Report be accepted.

32/14 SALISBURY GARDENS

- a) Report 17/4 recorded the success of the Town Council's application to the Coastal Communities Fund in a total of £95,000 and set out the funding arrangements that would make possible the completion of Phases 1 & 2 at the same time in the programme of building works.
- b) The Report also proposed that a significant saving be made to the cost of the telecoms infrastructure by funding it from the Town Council's cash reserves rather than through a lease agreement with the investment being treated as an interest free loan repayable over the next 10 years.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

- i) authorises the inclusion of Phase 2 with Phase 1 for the initial building programme, funded as set out in section 3) of Report 17/14;
 - ii) delegates to the Town Clerk, advised by Councillor Jim Toogood, authority to progress and manage the implementation of the extended building programme;
 - iii) agrees to fund the purchase of the new telecommunications system from currently held funds to be treated for accounts purposes as an interest free loan to be repaid within 10 years by agreement; and
 - iv) commits to an assurance that there will be no call on the Precept for funding of the building's operational costs and an examination of the detailed cash flow forecasts already considered by the Public Buildings Working Group and seen by the Town Council's Internal Auditor during the private session of this meeting.
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33/14 OUR PLACE!

- a) The Town Council's successful application to join the Department of Communities and Local Government's *Our Place!* programme was recorded in Report 18/14 for this meeting.
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- b) The Report included recommendations about arrangements for the Town Council's engagement in the planning required for the project.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

asks the Community Development Working Group to take on responsibility for engagement with staff in the development of the Our Place! programme and appoints Councillor Ken Knapman as an additional member of the Group.

34/14 SEASONAL SERVICES

- a) Councillor Jim Toogood introduced this item dealing with the Town Council's responsibilities for the operation of the Beach Safety project and the Esplanade Paddling Pool for the 2014 season.
- b) Report 19/14 for this meeting provided details of the proposed arrangements.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

authorises the Town Clerk to make all necessary arrangements for the delivery of the Beach Safety Project and the availability of the Paddling Pool for the 22 weeks from Friday 11 April to Sunday 14 September and agrees to the allocation of an additional £1,250 to the Beach Safety project from the ring-fenced budget line for maintaining local services.

35/14 DISCRETIONARY SERVICES

- a) Report 20/14 summarised the outcomes from the initial meeting of the Mayor and Clerks with the senior staff of the Isle of Wight Council's Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces Service and the data that had been provided as a result of it.
- b) Councillor Ken Knapman referred to the interest demonstrated at the 27 January annual consultation meeting in retaining services and standards.
- c) The Deputy Mayor said that ongoing discussions would be really important and welcomed the willingness of the Public Buildings Working Group to take on responsibility for exploring the issues.
- d) Councillor Stewart Blackmore commented on a number of sites and questioned the currently listed costs for them.
- e) Councillor Ed Gouge stressed the importance of arriving a complete picture of the demands and possibilities.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

asks the Public Buildings Working Group to widen its current remit to include work with the Clerks identifying the costs and consequences of taking on local services that the Isle of Wight Council ceases to be able to fund and prepare recommendations on the detail to future meetings of the Town Council.

36/14 ROAD SIGNS

- a) Councillor Terry Gibbs introduced this item, recognising the responsibilities of Island Roads and the pressures on them due to the unusually challenging weather. However he wanted to raise the importance of more clearly signposting road closures indicating the distance before they actually came into effect, citing the one of Park Road that was placed 1.25 miles before the actual closure, penalising businesses in the intervening distance.
- b) He asked how signage was being managed and whether improved technology was necessary to ensure that residents and visitors alike had accurate and specific information and pointed out that urgent action and application is required prior to the influx of holiday visitors next month.
- c) The Mayor said that he had already made representations as a County Councillor on precisely this matter

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

asks its Clerks to make representations to Island Roads on this matter.

37/14 IWALC REPORT

- a) Councillor Ken Knapman deputised for Councillor Harry Rees in reporting on attendance at the recent Isle of Wight Association of Local Council's Finance Committee and reported on the ongoing discussions about Assisted Area Status, pointing out that Councillor Harry Rees had been in contact the Island's MP on the matter.
- b) The Mayor stressed that the Isle of Wight Council was still very committed to ensuring the best possible situation for the Island to be able to access European funding..

36/14 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

The report from the Town Clerks – 21/14 – provided information about the recently held *Facing the Future* Conference, a successful First Aid Course, the Tidal Energy consultation, the Town Council's Working Groups, Armed Forces Day and the Boxing Club.

• PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum:

- a) A member of the Public asked about the progress of the proposal to detach the Green from the Salisbury Gardens lease to the Town Council.
- b) Wendy Marshall said that she had reported the damage to the town centre bus shelter and that some plantings had been removed from the Leeson Road Gateway.
- c) She went on to say that all Beach Cleaners had been recalled for 11 April and that all had had their hours cut.
- d) Over 60 dogs had been chipped at the recent Spar session.
- e) Jane Goodlet reported on events being organised by the New Carnival Committee.

37/14 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

In view of the confidential nature of the following items:

it was resolved under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings (1960) Act: to exclude the Public and Press whilst the next items are under discussion as they are of a confidential nature.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.18 PM

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE